

1713
T W O
S E R M O N S.

The First Preached at CHRIST CHURCH, *Newgate-Street*, on the First Sunday in *LENT*,

B E F O R E

The Right Hon. the LORD MAYOR, &c.

From JUDGES, Chap. xvi. Ver. 25.

And they called for Samson out of the Prison House, and he made them Sport.

The other Preached at St. *ANN* and *AGNES*, *Aldersgate*, in the Morning; and at St. *Michael's Cornhill*, in the Afternoon; on FRIDAY, *February 17, 1758.*

B E I N G T H E

F A S T D A Y.

From St. MATTHEW, Chap. x. Ver. 36.

And a Man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.

By the Rev. JAMES PENN. *K.*
Under Grammar Master of CHRIST-HOSPITAL.

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[Price One Shilling.]

THE SECOND OF THE MONTH

The First Preached at Christ Church, Westminster, on the First Sunday in Lent.

BEFORE

The Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, &c.

From Joseph, Chaplain to Her Majesty, and to the Hon. the Lord Mayor, &c.



The second Preached at St. Andrew's Church, in the Strand, on the Second Sunday in Lent, the 17th of February, 1788.

THE SECOND OF THE MONTH

From St. Andrew's Church, in the Strand, on the Second Sunday in Lent, the 17th of February, 1788.

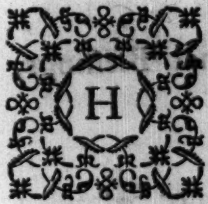
By the Rev. JAMES HENRY, Minister of Christ Church, Westminster.

Printed by A. MILLAR, in Pall Mall, near St. James's Church, in the Strand, 1788.



JUDGES, Chap. 16. Ver. 25.

And they called for Samson out of the Prison-House, and he made them Sport.



ISTORY is justly allowed to be not only entertaining, but instructive; at the same Time recreating and improving the Mind. The Lives of Persons eminent and distinguished for their Virtue and Piety, their Valour and Prudence, are apt to excite a Spirit of Emulation in some, and a Desire of Imitation in other Readers. The Vicious, as well as Virtuous, are pleased and delighted with the Characters; and from considering the Amiability of the Description, the singular Rewards and Honours they have met with and received, have been led not only to admire, but attempt the Characters themselves.

It is not solely from the Examples of the Good and Brave, that we may learn Lessons of Morality and Wisdom, but even the Weak and Wicked have their Uses. By the former we are encouraged to a Love of all that is great and good, from the many happy Advantages arising from it; and by the latter we are cautioned against Folly and Vice, from the many Distresses and Calamities they unavoidably occasion.

No History can furnish out more remarkable Instances of both than the *Jewish*; and it frequently happens, that in the same Hero we see the Rewards of Virtue, and the Punishment of Vice remarkably exemplified: I believe in no Character so extraordinarily as in *Samson's*; from whose History I shall draw the following, I hope, no unuseful Reflections:

B

First,

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First, that the Favours of Providence are not bestowed according to our State and Condition in Life, in Respect of Birth, Title or Fortune, but according to what we are in ourselves, virtuous or wicked.

Secondly, that the Virtue and Piety of the Parents do not only draw down the Divine Favour upon themselves, but also upon their Children.

Thirdly, that the giving ourselves up to any vicious and darling Passion, frequently ends in our Misery and Ruin.

Fourthly, that though we may have sacrificed our Virtue, if we sincerely repent, we shall recover the Divine Favour.

Fifthly, that being merry at the Misfortunes of an Enemy, often proves of dangerous Consequence to ourselves.

Lastly, that Providence with-holds or bestows national Blessings, according to the Virtues or Vices of the People.

First, I am to shew that the Favours of Providence are not bestowed according to our State and Condition in Life, in Respect of Birth, Title or Fortune, but according to what we are in ourselves, virtuous or wicked.

Providence, in bestowing its Favours, is not governed by those Motives which principally direct us. Interest and Power determine our Judgment and Choice. Good Morals and Abilities have frequently proved slender Recommendations; and the Man of little Worth and Merit had the Preference in our Esteem. Excellencies without Titles, or Virtues without Riches, may be admired, but seldom meet with proper Encouragement. We are actuated by a narrow selfish Principle, and give where we may expect a Return, not where it may be due. The less able any one is to serve us, the fewer Kindnesses we confer upon him.

But not so Providence; the virtuous Person, whoever he is, and whatever his Situation in Life may be, is the only Object of its Care and Love. Persons, as remarkable for their Poverty as their Piety, have been raised from the meanest to the most exalted Station; and others, as remarkably great as infamous, have fallen from the highest

Pitch

Pitch of Honour and Grandeur into the lowest Contempt and Ignominy. A *Joseph* and a *Samson*, a *David* and a *Mary*, are notable Instances of this Proceeding of Providence; whose Circumstances in Life afforded no promising Hopes of their future State and Magnificence. And a *Jezebel* and a *Zedekiah* had little Reason to expect so fatal a Period to Royalty; as the one to be eaten by Dogs, and the other to have his Eyes burnt out.

It sometimes happens that the Vicious are prosperous and successful, seem not to be outwardly affected with Troubles and Misfortunes, nor visited with any singular Calamity; yet they are not, nor can be happy: For to be wicked, is to be miserable. Vice, of whatever Kind it is, cannot be followed without the Expence of Time, Health or Fortune; which is Affliction enough; wicked Men need no greater in this Life.

The Virtuous also are sometimes in Trouble and Distress, which cannot otherwise be; unless the established Order of Things was changed, and Men were put under the absolute Necessity of acting agreeably to Justice, or Providence was to interpose continually in their Favour.

The Intention of Providence however is, that the Virtuous should be always happy; and it hath frequently bestowed unexpected Blessings upon them, interposed in their Distresses, relieved and supp'ied their Wants and Necessities. But if they are not rewarded here, they have the comfortable Hope, that they shall be hereafter; and that transient momentary Sorrow, will be recompensed with eternal Joy.

Under the Christian Dispensation such signal Judgments cannot be inflicted upon the Wicked, as were under the Jewish, that being founded upon temporal Sanctions; but the Christian's Hopes are, if not solely, more particularly future. And, as before observed, Divine Judgments are rendered somewhat unnecessary, since a troubled Mind and a disordered Body are to the Wicked in this Life sufficient Punishments; not to mention the Fear and Apprehension of something future. And an easy Conscience with an healthy Constitution, or if infirm, the Consideration that it is the Effect of Nature, not of Sin and Folly, are, if none other Reward was annexed, as it renders

renders Life pleasant and comfortable, sufficient to excite us to the Practice of Virtue and Religion.

As Providence then makes no Distinction amongst Men according to their Birth, Title or Fortune, but the Virtuous are by it only regarded, and will certainly in the next, if not in this Life, be rewarded; What an Encouragement is here given to Obedience? Need any Sollicitations and Intreaties be used in a Matter, wherein your own Interest is so intimately concerned? Can there be any Thing more desirable than to have God for your Friend? Who, when in want, can be more able, or will be more ready to assist you? Who, when Anguish and Sorrow come upon you, can better remove it? What is required to be done by us to procure the Favour of this kind Preserver and Benefactor? Is it any Thing more than what must be allowed to be becoming and just? and what, if Virtue had no future Reward, is highly deserving of our Esteem and Reverence. To have the Passions in subjection; the Body free from Diseases, and a Conscience undisturbed with Guilt; are Satisfactions which the Sensualist wishes to enjoy, and envies the Possessor.

Let us then live in Obedience to the Laws of God, and our Undertakings will be accompanied with the Divine Blessing. This many good Men have experienced; who have been surpris'd with an agreeable but unexpected Change of Fortune: Wicked Men also, who thought themselves secure from Accidents, have met with as unexpected a Reverse. Some are apt to impute these Events to Chance or Fate; but from the Circumstances attending them, they must appear to the Serious and Considerate not to have happened in the common and ordinary Way.

Secondly, that the Virtue and Piety of the Parents do not only draw down the Divine Favour upon themselves, but also upon their Children.

This was the Case of *Manoah* and his Wife, whose singular Piety was singularly rewarded; first in the Birth of a Son, which was no small

Joy

Joy to them who had never been blessed with any Child; and secondly in a Son, who should deliver their Country from the Tyranny and Oppression of the *Philistines*.

It is true that this happened according to the Sanctions of the Jewish Law; by which the Virtues or Vices of the Parents proved the Happiness or Misery of the Children. Notwithstanding this, though under the Christian Dispensation the Virtues or Vices of the Parents cannot make the Children obnoxious to the divine Displeasure, nor entitle them to the divine Favour; yet as it is certainly the greatest Felicity, that we can enjoy here, to behold the Prosperity of our Children, and no inconsiderable Misfortune to see them in Distress; if we are observant of the Laws of God, we may expect dutiful and obedient Children, such as may prove a Blessing and a Comfort, not a Sorrow and a Curse. This Blessing many pious Persons have received and acknowledged; and where the contrary Event hath happened, we wish that the Piety of the Parents had not failed, and the Unhappiness of the Children been owing to their bad Examples.

Thirdly, the giving ourselves up to any vicious and darling Passion, frequently ends in our Misery and Ruin.

Samson, whom no Art, Stratagem, nor Force of the *Philistines* could subdue, was ensnared and vanquished by the Perfidy and Treachery of a base Woman. Whilst innocent, he was honoured with particular Instances of the Divine Favour; neither the Malice, nor Power of his Enemies had any Effect: But when the Laws of God were transgressed, and he had given a Loose to his sinful Pleasures, his Enemies quickly got the Advantage over him, and he became the Sport and Derision of those, who lately trembled at his Presence.

Are not the same or similar Misfortunes the constant Attendants of Vice? How many Lives and Fortunes have been sacrificed to a vicious Passion! How numerous and melancholy are the Instances of Misery and

and Distress occasioned by an excessive Fondness of, and Attachment to, unlawful Gratifications!

When the Paths of Virtue are forsaken, and the Obligations to the Practice of Religion superseded, we walk as it were upon a Precipice, from which few, if any, escape safe and unhurt. We may for a Time please and gratify ourselves in forbidden Enjoyments, and no Evil happen; but, if we continue to live in Disobedience to the Laws of God, let us not flatter ourselves, that our End will be happy. Intemperance of any Kind always terminates in Poverty, Disease, Ignominy, or Contempt.

To mention two Vices, Debauchery and Drunkenness. What Afflictions; what Calamities; what Disorders have they occasioned! What Crimes; what Villainies have they been productive of, both before and after Gratification! The Laws of God disregarded; the Laws of Man violated; our Families wronged, and ourselves injured.

Flatter not yourself that the End of vicious Practices will be as the Beginning, agreeable. The Appetite upon frequent Enjoyment is palled; and the Senses by frequent Gratifications are weakened and impaired. Desire indeed may remain, but the Power of relishing will soon be over. Do not imagine that if no Calamity, Disorder, nor Disease may attend you in the early Practice of Vice, that thus it will always be with you. What immense Treasures have Pride and Luxury exhausted? How many Rich and Affluent have been reduced to Want and Beggary? From whence come the Misfortunes we daily see or hear of? From whence happen Dropsies, Consumptions, Gout, Palsy, and Inflammations in old Age? Are these Diseases the Effects of Temperance and Sobriety in our youthful Days? From whence proceed Cheats, Frauds and Bankruptcies? Are they the genuine Offsprings of Honesty and Industry? From whence Lowness of Spirits, the troubled and disordered Soul, the Fear of Death and Dread of Futurity? Proceed they from the Observance of Virtue and Religion? No. All these Evils flow from Folly and Extravagance; and we are unhappy and miserable, not because we have
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been good, but wicked. In our youthful Days we may be insensible of Pain; but, if not before, which frequently happens, the nearer Approach we make to the last Stage of Life, the Seeds of Misery then sown will spring up; and when we can bear Affliction least, we shall be most afflicted. Ease, Rest, and Comfort, when mostly wanted, will forsake us. Reflection upon what is past, and the disagreeable Sensation of what is present, with the dreadful Prospect of something future, will make the hoary Head sink down with Sorrow to the Grave.

Fourthly, that, though we may have sacrificed our Virtue, if we sincerely repent, we shall recover the divine Favour.

Of which Truth *Samson* is an illustrious Proof: Who, when by an extreme Fondness for a base Woman he lost his Liberty, and with it his Sight; from an Acknowledgement of his Crime, regained the Favour of God, who heard his Prayer, and in a most extraordinary Manner punished his Enemies.

What an Encouragement is here given to the Wicked to become virtuous and good? Is it not enough to have our Guilt cancelled and our Sins pardoned? Is not this Love sufficient to awaken us to an Amendment of Life? But what shall we say, if to the Pardon of our Sins, we add the Promise of the divine Favour? What Excuse can now be found for Impenitency? What amazing Power and Influence must Sin have over us, if we can withstand such Goodness! But how will our Folly be aggravated, when we consider for what we slight the Friendship of Heaven! For that, which, when enjoyed, distracts the Mind, and disorders the Body; yields a momentary Joy, and is the Cause of Eternal Sorrow; brands us with Infamy and Disgrace here, and consigns us over to everlasting Woe and Sorrow hereafter. Is it for such Enjoyment, that the Friendship of Heaven is slighted? The very mention of it, one would think, should create an Abhorrence; yet how eagerly sought after and pursued? Notwithstanding

standing many and terrible are the sad Effects of Vice, how little are the Generality of Men influenced by them.

But of you we hope better Things; that you will not suffer yourselves to be deluded by the false Pleasures, which Sin offers to her Voluntaries, but endeavour, as you have Opportunity, to secure the divine Favour, by a sincere Sorrow for Sins past, and Amendment of Life for the future. Such Behaviour, I am persuaded, you will never have any Reason to repent of, since it entitles you to the Care and Protection of Providence, which will be always watching over you, either to divert Misfortunes, or bestow Blessings upon you. Add to this the unspeakable Satisfaction which a good Conscience yields to the Possessor: A Thing so necessary to the Happiness of Man, that if there was no God, nor Heaven, nor Hell, yet it would be well worthy of his Attainment; for without it there can be no true Enjoyment of Life. This every good Man knows to be true; and even the Wicked acknowledge, from the Sorrow and Uneasiness which they experience to be the constant Attendants upon Guilt.

Fifthly, that being merry at the Misfortunes of an Enemy, often proves of dangerous Consequence to ourselves.

The *Philistines*, when they had *Samson* in their Power, made a Feast to their God; and like a cruel and ungenerous Enemy, put out his Eyes, and insulted him under his Misfortunes. The Consequence of which was the Death of all the Lords of the *Philistines*, and near three thousand others.

As the Frowns and Favours of Fortune are various, and Adversity and Prosperity frequently succeed each other; as neither Power nor Wealth can ensure human Happiness, but seemingly when most secure from Danger, we may be near the Period of our Greatness; little Reason hath any one to insult those in Affliction, since he may soon be in the same unhappy Condition; nor to exult and rejoice at the Calamities of

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an Enemy, since, though it may not be in his Power to do us any Good, he may not want for Means to molest and injure us.

How many Emperors and Kings have fallen by private Assassinations? How many Empires and States have been subverted by Men of little Note; who, from being contemned and despised, came to be honoured and feared?

We cannot have too many Friends, nor too few Enemies; and the best Way to multiply the one, and diminish the other, is to behave with Civility and Courtesy to all Men: Advice not difficult to be complied with; for good Nature and good Manners cost us nothing. If our Enemy hungers, let us according to our Lord's Command feed him; if he thirsts, give him Drink; and if naked, clothe him. With good Reason is this Command given, and well worthy of our Practice; since it must naturally dispose him to think more charitably of us; to abate somewhat of his Resentment; and, it may be, of an Enemy, to make him become your Friend: But the contrary Behaviour will provoke Resentment, and add Fuel to the Fire.

Lastly, I am to shew that Providence withholds or bestows national Blessings, according to the Virtues of the People.

The *Jewish* History affords a Variety of Instances of this Proceeding of Providence. The *Jews*, as often as they transgressed the Laws of their God, were distressed and oppressed by their Enemies; and as often as they repented, their Enemies were distressed and oppressed by them. This was effected, before the Establishment of the Regal Government, by a particular divine Commission given to a single Person, who was generally appointed both their Deliverer and Judge. The former Character *Samson* appeared in; who was to retaliate upon the *Philistines* the several Insolences and Oppressions they had at several Times committed against the *Israelites*.

As the national Vices of the *Jews* were the Cause of their publick Misfortunes, and a Return to publick Virtue their only Remedy to

retrieve the Losses sustained ; may we not attribute our own Disappointments and bad Success to the same Cause ? If we take a View of the Morals of the Age, we cannot question it. Our Vices are too public, too generally complained of, to need pointing out.

A certain Selfishness and Extravagance run through the whole Community. The Rich and Poor equally affect to appear above their Fortune and Condition. Each esteems another happier and better than himself, according to the external Figure and Appearance made, and hath none other Value and Esteem for Things and Persons, than as they may turn out to private Profit and Advantage. A melancholy Proof this of the Depravity of our Taste, the Weakness of our Understanding, and the Corruption of our Manners.

How anxious and solicitous are we in procuring Wealth, how lavish in expending it when procured ! We acquire it with Pain and Labour, and in Folly and Vanity consume it. And thus it will ever be, whilst the Estimate of real Worth is founded on Externals ; and those are only honoured and caressed, who are clothed in Purple and fine Linen, and fare sumptuously and elegantly every Day. Strange Degeneracy this ! That the Excellencies of Ideots and Brutes should be the Criterion of Taste, and what a few Ages ago would have rendered Men vile and infamous, should be the Instruments of procuring Favours, and the Steps by which some Men have ascended to Posts of Honour and Eminence.

Let this be a Proof of the most abandoned Degeneracy reigning amongst us ; that Men are not only wicked, but the Vices which they commit, they do not labour to disguise and conceal ; and if known, to palliate and excuse, but boast of and glory in their Shame ; act in Defiance of the Laws of the Land, and in open Violation of the Duties of Religion ; disregard the Penalties of the one, and ridicule the awful Sanctions of the other ; live without any Dread or Concern of what may happen to them, either here or hereafter.

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If such is the Character of the present Times, need we be astonished at the cowardly and dastardly Spirit reigning amongst us, when Vice hath so many Friends and Virtue so many Enemies? Pleasure, Luxury, Effeminacy and Extravagance, are too predominant amongst all Orders of Men, and in all Places. The Court, the City, the Camp, the Fleet, the Merchant, the Tradesman, the Labourer, even the Horns of the Altar are stained and polluted with these Vices: Vices which are the Ruin of Industry and Honesty, and the Bane of Merit and Genius; will overturn the best established Government, and cancel the Obligation due to the purest Religion in the World.

How weak and absurd then the Complaints exhibited against our Commanders; since the same Faults which we charge them with, we should have been guilty of, had we been in the same Situation! If they prefer Interest and Pleasure to the Prosperity and Welfare of their Country, nay, even sacrifice the latter to be possessed of and enjoy the former: Is the Drunkard, the Debauchee, the Gamester, the vicious and immoral Man less culpable, or more a Friend of his Country? Could the Public expect to receive any Good from such Persons, if they were invested with the Power of directing, managing or executing State Affairs? Yet such Persons are many of those, who at every unfortunate Event are full of Censure and Declamation against Actions, which they would, if we may judge from their present Behaviour, have also committed.

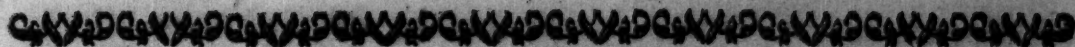
Our late Miscarriage is indeed imputed to Fear, Neglect and Indolence; yet as the Commanders were generally supposed to have been able Men, of approved Courage and Resolution, hitherto free from the Imputation of Cowardice, I think, we may not unjustly, nor superstitiously say, that a superior Agent hath counteracted and disconcerted all our well-laid Schemes, hath blasted our Hopes; rendered our Designs unsuccessful; deprived us of Resolution; distracted our Councils, and brought us to the Brink of Ruin, by giving us over to a restless, clamorous, factious and perverse Spirit.

What

What Victories and Conquests therefore can attend our Arms abroad, if Providence acts against us; in making Men's Hearts fail them for Fear, even where no Danger was! Can we say that we have deserved its Favours? No: Unless our Vices, instead of our Virtues, are to plead for us. Oft hath he singularly interposed in our Behalf, and been our Friend. We wish that we had no Reason to fear, that he is not now our Enemy. Both our public and private Vices, known to all, as they are practised by too many, may make him so to be; our domestic Dissentions, Variances and Jealousies, not to mention our Defeats and Miscarriages, carry with them a strong Probability that he is.

But still let us not be dejected, dismayed nor despair: For we have this to comfort and support us under the present Distress of our Country, that a Return to public and private Virtue will regain him. This let every one recommend to others by his own Example, by Precept and Favour. Then we may expect to see Merit only rewarded and advanced, and the Worthless degraded and secluded from Places of Trust and Importance; and Persons of base and infamous Characters no longer triumphing in the Spoils of Virtue and Honesty. Then we may expect to see this Land once more prosperous and flourishing, and not as now be the Prey of every artful and designing Knave, who has Money and Interest sufficient to shelter himself from, or divert the Hand of Justice.

When we see Men not Lovers of themselves, but Lovers of God, not distinguishing themselves by any particular Attachments and Prejudices, but endeavouring only to know, in order to act what is right and good; then we shall become an happy and religious People, a People favoured and beloved of God, and enjoying Peace and Prosperity within ourselves. God Almighty grant that this Change both in our Morals and the Condition of our Country may be speedy, effectual and lasting: To whom with Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost be given Praise and Adoration now and for ever.



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S E R M O N

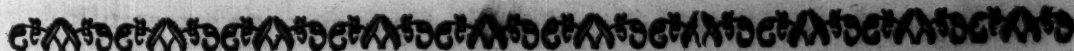
PREACHED AT

St. *ANN* and *AGNES*, ALDERSGATE,

On FRIDAY, *February* 17, 1758,

BEING THE

F A S T D A Y.



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OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE PARISH OF ST. ANDREW

ALDERSGATE

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. ANDREW AND AGNES, ALDERSGATE

ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1758

BEING THE

F A S T D A Y.

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

First, from the Encouragement given to Fidelity and Early Spirit.



St. MATTHEW, Chap. x. Ver. 36.

And a Man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.

WE are again met to implore the Divine Blessing upon our Arms. How necessary it is, our bad Success hitherto shews. The Cause of these Disappointments and unfortunate Events is well known. To sympathize with our Country's Distress is natural; but let us not give into a Dejection of Spirits, because the Enemy hath as yet been superior to us, not on Account of his superior Courage and Conduct, but our Supineness, Negligence and Cowardice: Nor abound in grievous, tho' just Complaints against the Authors of our Misfortunes and Disgrace; but rather endeavour to find out the Means of retrieving the former, and removing the latter.

The original Cause of the Evils which we at present labour under, private or publick, foreign or domestick, is to be met with in ourselves. Men of Abilities are not wanting to contrive, but Hands are slow and backward to execute. When Wisdom and Prudence have designed and prescribed, Indolence and Fear have rendered the Design fruitless and abortive. We are our own Enemies; which I shall endeavour to shew.

First,

First, from the Encouragement given to Faction and Party Spirit, civil or religious.

Secondly, from the general Corruption of Manners that hath diffused itself over the Nation.

Thirdly, that the conferring Civil, Military and Ecclesiastical Preferments, without regarding Merit and Ability, is the Cause of our publick Vices and Misfortunes.

Fourthly, that our present Misfortunes are to be looked upon as public Blessings.

Lastly, I shall offer some general Instructions, for your Consideration and Practice, as the Means of effecting a Reformation of Manners amongst us.

FIRST,

I am to shew that we are our own Enemies, from the Encouragement given to Faction and Party Spirit, civil or religious.

Whatsoever infuses Hatred and Malice into the Minds of Men, is subversive of their Peace and Happiness. Need it be said that Party thus operates? Is it not visible, that it destroys the strongest Friendship and Interest? Hath it not proceeded so far, as even to cancel and make void the Laws of common Justice and Humanity; inasmuch as it hath been urged as a Disqualification to Merit; an Excuse for being uncharitable; and allowed a sufficient Reason for saying the worst of Things of the best of Men, and bestowing the highest Encomiums upon the worst?

Have not Favours been, are they not still conferred, not according to Parts and Morals, but according to the Principles imbibed and pro-

professed? Are not the Slaves and Tools of Faction the most successful Candidates for Wealth, Honour and Power? Can it then surprise, that private Animosities, publick Discontent, and Abuses in Office should prevail, when they are encouraged, promoted and upheld by Party? Hence Persons of the most infamous Characters, and others of the weakest Understanding, have been recommended to, and obtained the most lucrative Posts and Employments. What then but Oppression and Insolence, Negligence and Disorder must, as the Publick hath frequently experienced, attend the Government and Management thereof? What Encouragement is given to Merit, when this is the Method to be pursued to procure Preferment? Who will labour, study, and be at an Expence to render himself able and qualified for any Place or Office, when the Purchase may be so easily made? But is this of Service to our Country and Religion? Is it not sacrificing the true Interest of both to a Name, a Nothing?

Have not these Party Attachments distracted and disconcerted of late the Councils of State; and hath not the public Welfare been subservient to them? Have not Men appeared warm in Opposition to Measures wisely planned, merely because the Authors were of a different Party?

What then but the same unhappy Events will again occur, when Unanimity is wanting, and an unreasonable, not to say criminal, Partiality appears in our Councils; When Men in Power wantonly oppose, not mutually assist and co-operate with each other? And this they do, not from a real Affection for their Country, and an honest and laudable Jealousy, lest it should receive any Injury; but lest one Party should acquire more Weight and Power in the Direction and Management of public Affairs than the other. Such the Conduct of the declared Friends of *Britain*! Such the Behaviour of those, who are continually sounding in our Ears their Love of their Country! But such Friends are its greatest Enemies: And the Fruits of this Love are at present

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Misfortunes

Misfortunes and Miscarriages ; and, if not by an happy Union prevented, our Distresses will be multiplied, and terminate in civil Discord, domestick Slavery, or foreign Subjection.

Let every one then in his particular Station and Calling destroy this Party-Spirit in himself; discourage and discountenance it in others: Let the Friends of Virtue and Religion, and the Man of Merit, always have the Preference in our Esteem. Never let us be influenced, nor determined by Party to do any Thing that is wrong, or to forbear doing what we know to be right and good.

SECONDLY.

We are our own Enemies from the general Corruption of Manners that hath diffused itself over the Nation.

This is a Truth too obvious, and too frequently complained of, to need much, if any, Illustration. Our excessive Love of Pleasure, and the vast Sums of Money lavished away upon it, notwithstanding the unhappy Situation of publick Affairs, and the extraordinary and unusual Price the Necessaries of Life bear, speak a Degeneracy that makes a Reformation necessary, and at the same Time shew it to be almost impracticable. Gaiety, Extravagance, and Luxury have corrupted our Morals, and debauched our Constitutions; have effeminated those, who should be inured to Toil, Labour and Fatigue; have occasioned many others to prefer the Love of themselves to the Love of their Country; and to sacrifice its Good to their private Ease and Advantage. What then will be the Result of this, but either a feeble and impotent War, or a dishonourable and inglorious Peace? Whilst we are addicted to these Vices, we may scheme and contrive indeed how to distress and annoy the Enemy; but may justly doubt of Success; and fear, that as before, we shall be exposed to future Mockery and Derision.

True

True Courage is founded upon Virtue; not upon the Love, but Contempt of this World: He who is fond of its Pleasures, never yet hath been, and never will be brave. How can he be a true Friend to another, who is an Enemy to himself? If, as it sometimes may happen, he doth good, it proceeds not from a Principle of Duty, as doing what he ought to do, but from Fear, lest he should expose himself to any civil Punishment, for neglecting to do it.

But let us remember, that whilst we are bestowing Censures upon others, we ourselves also are obnoxious to the same. The same Follies and Vices infect the lower, as well as higher, Class of People; they are as intemperate, extravagant, vain and indolent: Of which the Bankruptcies of some, the scanty Subsistence of others, and the extreme Poverty of many are an undeniable Testimony.

It is surprising, when all acknowledge the Usefulness and Necessity of an immediate Reformation, that all should not immediately begin to reform and amend. We do not find, however, this Acknowledgement to have this Effect. The same want of Thought, the same Dissipation of Time, the same Attachments to Pleasure and Fondness of Luxury continue, as if neither our Country nor Liberty were in Danger; or, rather, as we may not improperly judge from such Behaviour, that we neither regarded the Prosperity of the one, nor the Preservation of the other, so long as we are permitted thus freely to enjoy ourselves.

It hath been principally owing to Encouragement and Licence given to publick Diversions, that publick Spirit hath decayed; Immorality gained Ground; Religion dwindled away into Form and Ceremony; the People been inattentive to, and regardless of the Interest and Happiness of their Country; bad Ministers been supported; the Nation involved

involved in its present Distress, and Enquiries into its State and Condition prevented, or diverted.

It is Time therefore to lay aside Enjoyments, which in the End may prove fatal; and to behave like Men and Christians, in not doing any thing that may be injurious and prejudicial, or a Disgrace and Dishonour to the Constitution. If, as we frequently boast, we have a Value for Liberty, and detest Slavery, let us ever remember that Pleasure will deprive us of the one, and rivet the other upon us. I need not cite Instances, for they are numerous. The *Persian*, *Grecian*, and *Roman* Empires are sufficient Proofs: What they acquired through Temperance and Industry, they afterwards lost and were dispossessed of by Pleasure and Luxury.

We wish, that Reformation was to begin where it ought, and the Practice of Virtue and Goodness recommended by the Example of Superiors: But whether they reform or not, it is fit, and it is our Duty and Interest, that we should. We cannot otherwise expect domestick Happiness, nor long to enjoy the Blessings of publick Tranquillity.

Though this Degeneracy of Manners is general, yet it is not universal. There are a few amongst the Great, who are good, of distinguished Merit, eminent for their Virtues, pure and untainted with the Vices of the Age. In these, when we consider their Excellencies and Abilities, there are some Hopes left, that national Ruin will be prevented: But when we also consider, that Corruption is so great, Abuses so many, and Faction so powerful and prevalent, these Hopes appear to be chimerical, and we are almost driven to despair of Success. However, let us not be the Authors of our own Misery, but nourish, not extinguish, the little Spark of Publick Spirit scarcely visible amongst us; and before we exclaim against bad Men, and bad Measures,

Measures, reform ourselves; otherwise we are equally culpable with them, as far as our Sphere of Action extends: For if the Publick pays for the Vices of the one, private Families, and Trade in general suffer for those of the other.

Let not Citizens, when exclaiming against Courtiers, appear fond of imitating their Foibles: Let not the expensive and absurd, not to say criminal Modes and Fashions, which they have justly held in Contempt and ridiculed, be introduced within their City Walls; nor Folly and Extravagance be recommended, where the Example of Prudence and Oeconomy should be set. In vain do they talk of, and seek for a Redress of Grievances and Abuses, if they themselves should countenance, and commit them.

By the Reformation of ourselves we shall strengthen the Hands of the few Good, and enable them to bear up against, and subdue the Power and Influence of the many Bad: By whose Diligence, Prudence and Resolution, conducted with Temper, Candour and Moderation, we may expect to see publick Virtue restored, and national Glory retrieved.

THIRDLY,

I am to shew that the conferring Civil, Military and Ecclesiastical Preferments, without regarding Merit and Ability, is one Cause of our publick Vices and Misfortunes.

For these many Years past it must have been observed, that Offices have been sought for Men, not Men for Offices; that Interest hath had the Preference to Ability, and Merit disregarded. Candidates for Places have succeeded, not by a Superiority of Parts, but a Superiority of Friends; so that the Spirit of Emulation, the Ornament and Honour of a State, is destroyed. The serving of the Publick

hath only the second Place in our Thoughts; the serving of ourselves, Relations, or Acquaintance, always the first.

If Employments can be procured consistent with the publick Good, well; if not, the publick Good must yield to private and selfish Views. Hence Youth are designed for Places before their Parts and Genius are known; and, when arrived at a certain Age, are placed in them, notwithstanding any Disqualifications. Such amongst the Great, whose Fortunes are small, and cannot be provided for any other Way, the Church and Army, it is well known, must receive: As if no Abilities were requisite for the Discharge of Trusts of the greatest Importance and Consequence to Christianity and the State.

We need not then be astonished that Immorality and Infidelity should gain Ground, when such are many of the Persons, who are to support and maintain the Cause of Virtue and Religion: When it is not from the Principle of doing Good, either to Individuals or the Community, that the Care of Souls is committed to them, but to supply the Deficiency and Want of a noble and indigent Family; to reward private Services at Elections, and to acquire greater Interest and Power. What real Concern can be shewn, when the Love of Money is the governing Principle? This sufficiently appears, from the little Attendance given to the Discharge of their Function.

What Encouragement given to Merit, when the best Livings in the Church have been disposed of in this Manner? How can it otherwise be, than that Persons, who would appear to a great Advantage in the Church, and be of considerable Service and Benefit to the Publick, should bend their Studies another Way, since they must else linger out a wretched Life in Indigence and Obscurity?

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Are not civil and military Employments also to be procured by the Interest of Friends, parliamentary Connections, or purchased with a Sum of Money? Are the Abilities enquired into, if the Purchase demanded is paid, or the Recommendation comes from a great Man, who must be obliged, though it is, as it hath often proved, at the Expence of the Publick? Are not Abilities slighted, if no Purchase can be made, no Recommendation procured? Hence Places are looked upon as gainful *fine cures*, or Annuities; for which they, who possess, think that nothing more is to be done than enjoy them. Hence it is, that they do not endeavour by their Conduct and Bravery, to make themselves more conspicuous, and deserving of higher Stations, because they know, that they are more easily and more effectually advanced by the never-failing Instruments of Money, or Friends. Hence it is, that instead of rendering themselves fit for the publick Service, by studying the Art of War, and accustoming themselves to Fatigues and Difficulties, they are weakening and impairing their natural Courage and Strength by effeminate and unmanly Pleasures; studying how to make the gayest Appearance at Places of publick Resort; not to be esteemed the brave and gallant Officer, but to be distinguished for the nice fine Gentleman.

What Principle of true Honour; What Thirst of Fame; What Contempt of Danger can be harboured in such Breasts as these? Whom Assemblies better suit than Camps, and an Arbour of soft Delights, than acquiring immortal Glory on the Plains of *Rosbach*. Such, O Britons! were not thy Fathers; though such are their degenerate Sons! How are the Mighty fallen, and the Weapons of War perished!

To what is it owing, that Men are not now afraid of neglecting their Duty, and abusing the Confidence placed in them? To what, but the Power of Interest, Family Connections, or their Influence and Weight:

Weight in the Senate? Hence, surrounded with such Friends, they look upon themselves, if guilty, secure from Danger; neither dread, nor regard the publick Resentment and Displeasure; knowing that it is far more safe to appear in a Court of Justice twice, than to face an Enemy once. What Affliction is this to Royalty, to behold such Servants! In what Distress our Country, to have such its Guardians! What but Disgrace and Infamy, as heretofore, can attend our military Operations; and what but national Ruin, unless Preferment shall hereafter be conferred as the Reward of Merit, will be the End thereof?

FOURTHLY,
I shall shew that our present Misfortunes are to be looked upon as publick Blessings.

This Observation may seem strange, but it is true: For when a Nation is upon the Decline, Success would spread the Corruption, render it universal, and make its Dissolution unavoidable. Wicked Men, when in Prosperity, not visited with any singular Trouble, Misfortune or Affliction, seldom think of Amendment of Life: But, when Enjoyment is past, or Distress hath seized them, then they begin to think seriously, and come to a proper and just Sense of their former Follies. It is the same with publick Bodies: For national Evils in Time of Peace, or in Time of War if successful, are not so much complained of, nor so readily enquired into, nor so easily redressed: Men over-looking, or not regarding their dangerous Tendency; judging Reformation to be altogether useless and unnecessary. But Misfortunes and Disappointments awaken them out of the Lethargy, into which Prosperity had lulled them; occasion them to enquire into the Causes, from whence they have proceeded, and to endeavour, by rectifying present Abuses, to prevent future Losses. We wish, that the Sense of the Losses we have met with, may produce this happy Effect.

LASTLY,

LASTLY.

I shall offer some general Instructions, for your Consideration and Practice, as the Means of effecting a Reformation amongst us.

If we are in earnest to prosecute the War, let us, in Imitation of the *German Prince*, in whose Praise and Commendation we cannot say too much, suspend the publick Diversions; and if we are serious in the intended Reformation, let them hereafter be so conducted, that at the same Time they recreate the Body, they may not vitiate the Mind.

Let every Species of Luxury be destroyed, shewing ourselves temperate and sober in all Things; that we may not be wrought upon, for the Gratification of any vicious and darling Passion, to do what may be of Prejudice to ourselves, or an Injury to the Publick.

Let Merit, wheresoever or in whomsoever it may be found, be entitled to our Favour and Friendship; but the Worthless, notwithstanding their high Birth or Descent, their Power or their Wealth, their Interest or Connections, be held as infamous.

Let Men of Probity, Integrity and Virtue, of whatsoever Sect or Party, be esteemed, caressed and honoured by us; but Zealots and Bigots of every kind be treated, as they deserve, with Indifference, Contempt and Ignominy.

Let us in our private Station appear not Lovers of Pleasures, but Lovers of God; not prophaning, but keeping holy his Sabbaths; not abusing, but reverencing his sacred Name; not intemperate, impure, contentious, uncharitable: For he cannot be a true and sincere

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Friend

Friend of his Country, who in his Practice is an Enemy to Virtue and Religion; neither can he, who observes and obeys their Laws, be an Enemy to his Country. Virtue is the Basis, upon which publick Happiness is founded; if that declines, the Fabrick totters, and will soon become a Ruin: But whilst it subsists, no Power on Earth will be able to shake, and unsettle it.

Let us train up our Children in these Sentiments; recommend, and, where we have Power, enforce the Observance of them upon Servants and Dependants.

Let us in this all be united, however we may differ and disagree about Things and Persons, to promote the apparent Good of our Country, and recover the Respect due to Religion; in every thing we do, or take in Hand, to be detached from, and detest private Interest and selfish Views, when they manifestly tend to injure private Property, or oppress the Publick; and, as far as our Knowledge extends, bring to Light those unworthy Members of Society, who are concerned in such base Practices; that if their Wealth and Power have rendered them at present superior to the Laws of their Country, yet their Names and Persons may be made odious and infamous to Posterity. Let no unmanly Fear of receiving an Injury, no servile Compliance to procure Favour, prevent you from publicly exposing, condemning and bringing to Justice those Characters and Persons, who in any Way, Manner, or Degree shall be found, knowingly and wilfully, to have acted inconsistent with, and in direct Opposition to the true Interest of their King, or the real Good of their Country.

We have been trifling long enough: It is Time to be, for the Matter grows serious. If we have a Desire to maintain our Freedom and Independency; to preserve and secure our Liberty, Laws and Religion from open and direct Violation, we must, and it is not doubted, if the
Influence

Influence of factious and violent Men is not too powerful, but we shall act upon a different Plan, than hath been for these many Years past pursued. Corruption and Abuse, civil, military and ecclesiastical, must be destroyed, otherwise the Nation will be destroyed.

We are now engaged in a War with a powerful and formidable Adversary; the first Events of it have proved very unsuccessful: What the Damages may be, we have not yet fully experienced. We hope, however, through the Blessing of Providence upon our Council and Arms, that this Year may prove more fortunate and favourable; that what hath been lost, may be retrieved; the Damages sustained, repaired; and the national Disgrace removed.

But then, to procure the Divine Blessing, we must endeavour to deserve it. Let us begin this Year with a Reformation of Manners, and then we may reasonably hope to see it end prosperously: But if, as before, we are still the Slaves of Vice and Wickedness, we shall in Time want Heads to contrive, Hands to execute, and Money to supply the necessary Occasions of War. The fatal Consequence of which we shall not mention, and may we never experience.

A State cannot long continue, which hath banished Virtue out of it. Let Temperance, Honesty, and Frugality therefore be more visible; Intemperance, Fraud, and Dishonesty less frequent amongst us; then we may expect to see Peace and Plenty; no more to hear the Noise of War; no more to hear the sad and piteous Complaints of Want within our Streets. The Calamities of War are great, but greater those which the industrious Poor, the Nation's Strength and Support, by whom our Fleets and Armies are manned, our Manufactures carried on, Husbandry and Tillage performed; greater Calamities those, which the Poor now feel and suffer from Cold and Hunger. From Hunger? rather from Avarice, and that Bane of Trade, Ingenuity and Industry, the

the Spirit of monopolizing, by which thousands are distressed for the enriching and aggrandizing a few : For by laying up or engrossing the whole, all Sorts of Commodities are raised to a most exorbitant Price, according to the mercenary and avaricious Temper of the Possessor. The Purchase of which, it is well known, is to the Rich expensive, and certain Ruin and Beggary to Numbers of the industrious and laborious Poor.

To the Blessed Trinity be given Praise and Adoration now and for ever.

F I N I S.

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